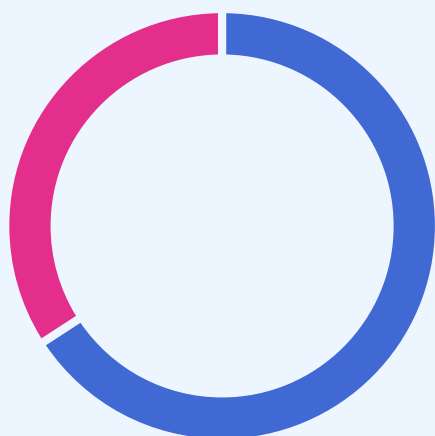REPORT

2025 Communications Compliance Survey

Smarsh polled compliance and IT professionals from 262 financial services organizations, including RIAs, broker-dealers, global banks, private equity firms and insurance providers.
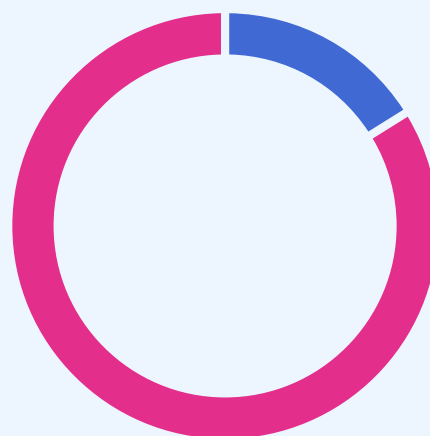
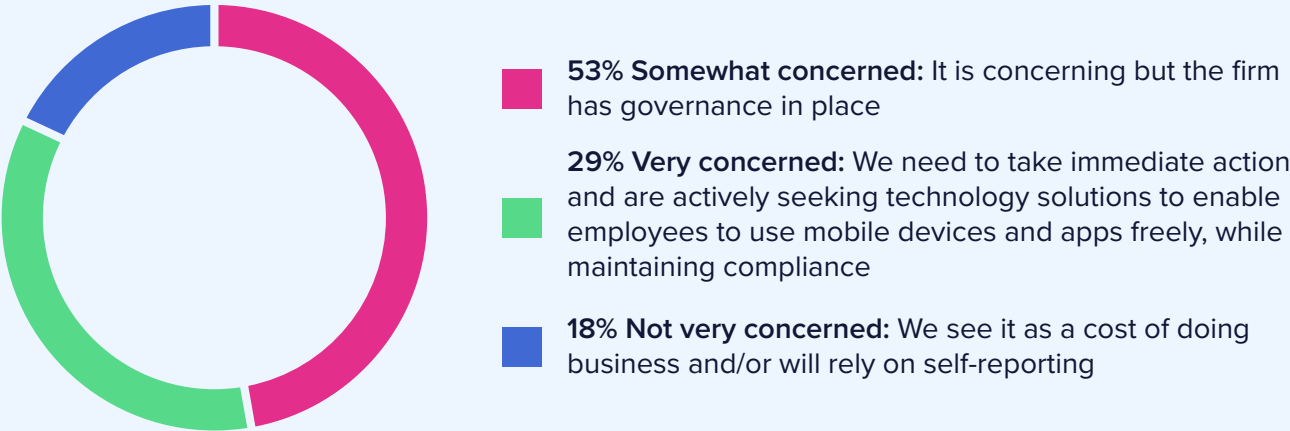**1. Does your firm allow employees to communicate via text message?**

66% Yes   **34%** No

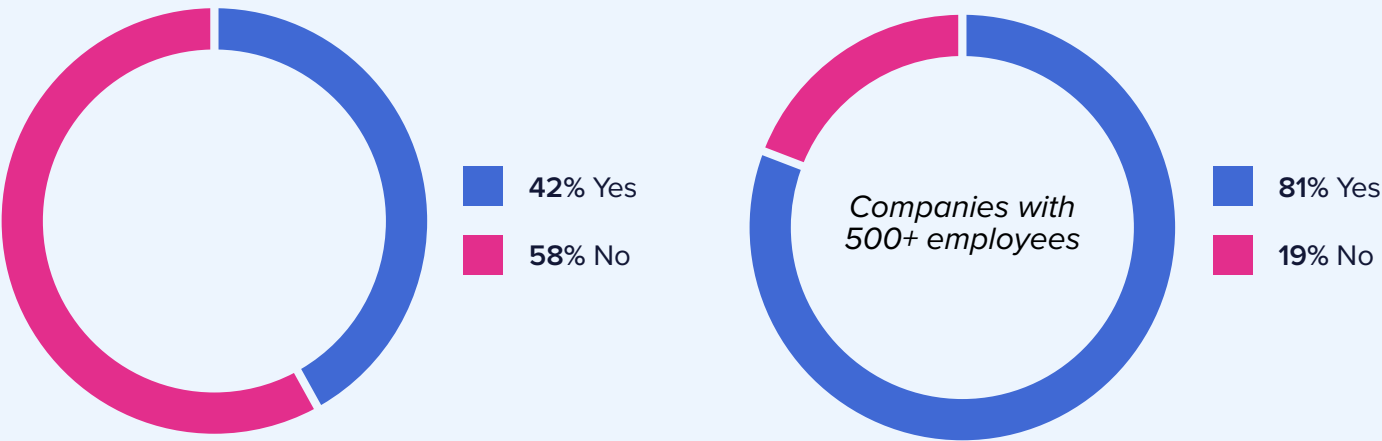**2. Does your firm allow employees to communicate via WhatsApp?**

16% Yes   **84%** No

3. How concerned is your firm about "off-channel" communications (i.e., employees using unmonitored mobile devices and apps for communications)?

53% Somewhat concerned: It is concerning but the firm has governance in place

29% Very concerned: We need to take immediate action and are actively seeking technology solutions to enable employees to use mobile devices and apps freely, while maintaining compliance

18% Not very concerned: We see it as a cost of doing business and/or will rely on self-reporting

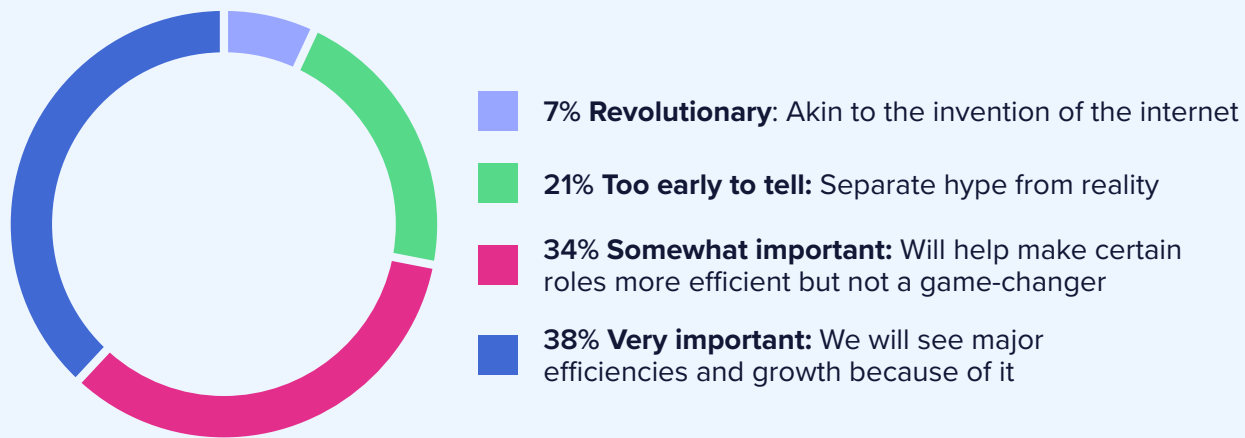**4. Beyond mobile apps and text messaging, are there other employee communications or productivity tools that you have recordkeeping or monitoring concerns about?**

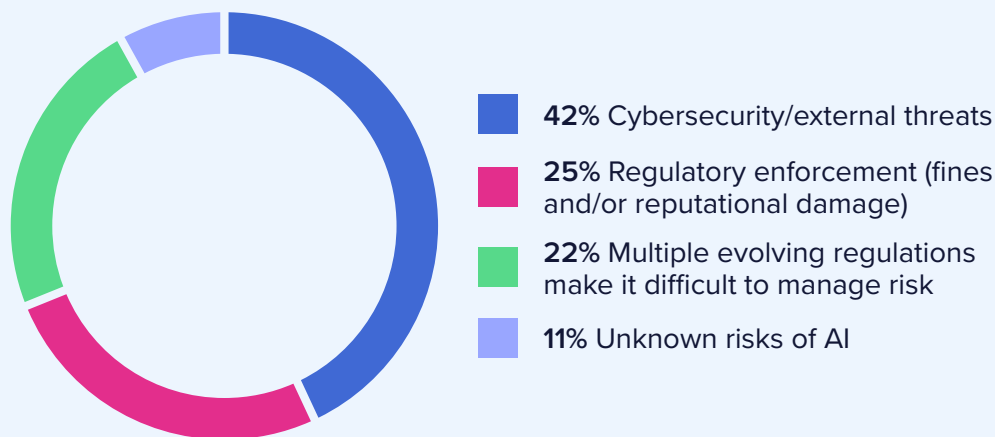**31%** Microsoft Teams

30% Zoom

19% Voice calls

13% ChatGPT

7% Slack
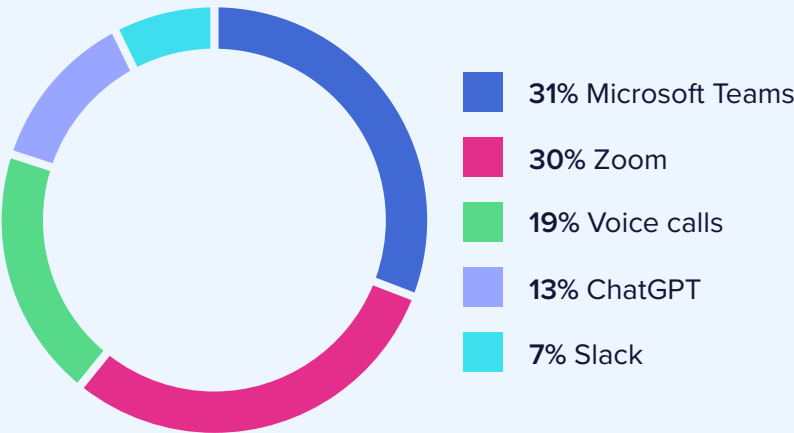
5. Does your firm feel pressure to implement new AI tools to remain competitive?

42% Yes

58% No

Companies with 500+ employees

81% Yes

19% No

6. How important do you believe AI is to the future of the financial services industry?

7% Revolutionary: Akin to the invention of the internet

21% Too early to tell: Separate hype from reality

34% Somewhat important: Will help make certain roles more efficient but not a game-changer
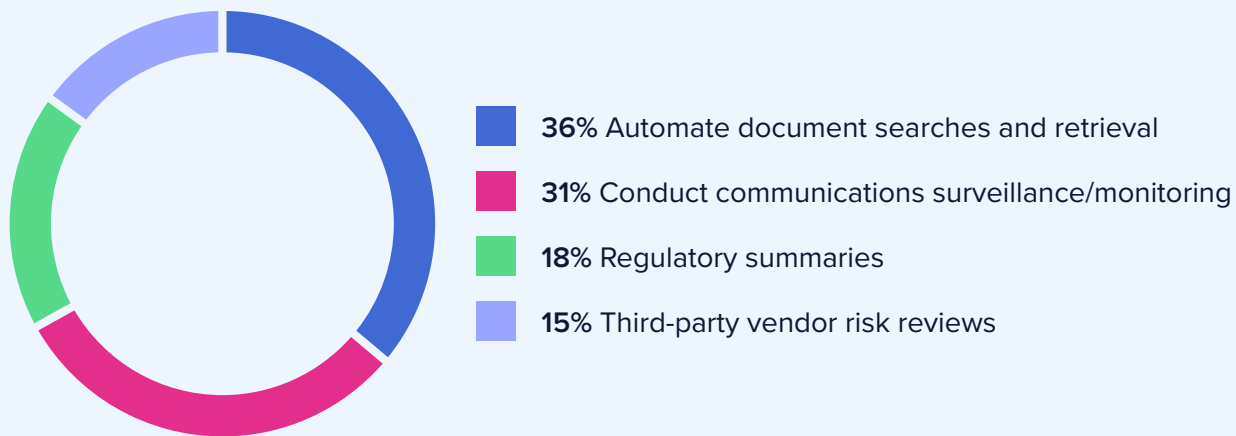
38% Very important: We will see major efficiencies and growth because of it

7. From a compliance/risk management perspective, what is the single largest threat to your firm's bottom line?

42% Cybersecurity/external threats

25% Regulatory enforcement (fines and/or reputational damage)

22% Multiple evolving regulations make it difficult to manage risk

11% Unknown risks of AI

8. What specifically about AI is the biggest threat to your firm?

45% AI data privacy/governance (exposure of firm's IP to AI systems)

44% AI-powered cyber threats

11% AI model risk (bias, hallucinations, explainability, etc.)
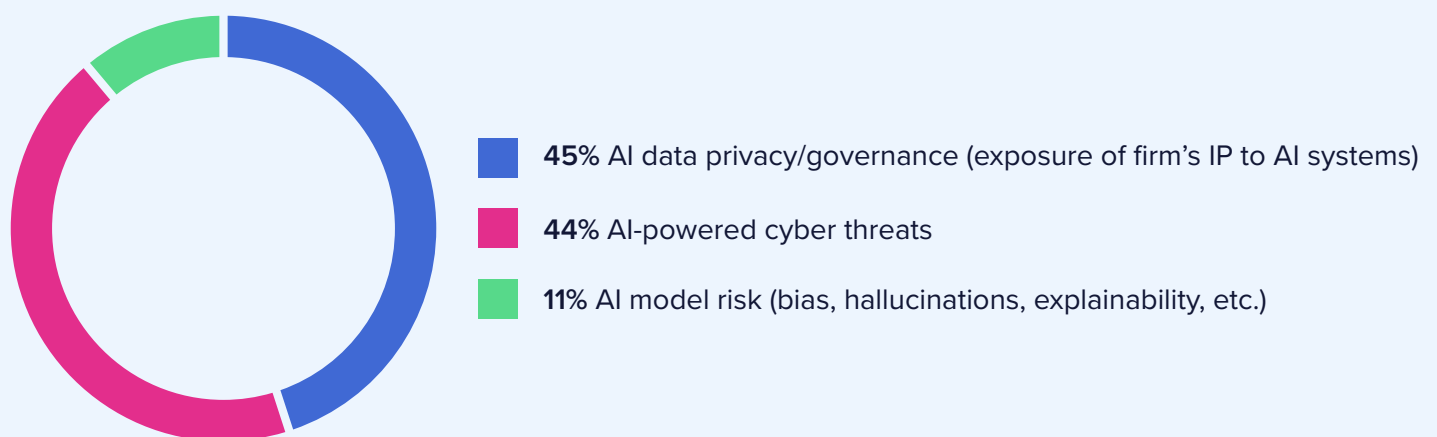
9. From a risk and compliance perspective, which is your highest priority AI use case?

- **36%** Automate document searches and retrieval
- **31%** Conduct communications surveillance/monitoring
- **18%** Regulatory summaries
- **15%** Third-party vendor risk reviews

10. For your executive leadership team, which is the highest priority AI use case?

- **37%** Employee productivity
- **32%** Risk management/compliance efficiency
- **13%** Marketing
- **9%** Front office/investing insights
- **9%** Client support/chatbot
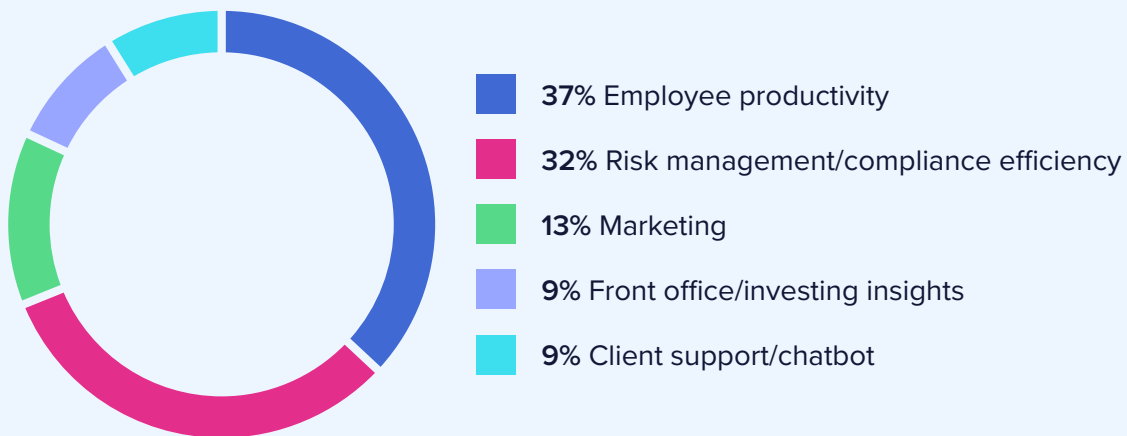
11. How do you best describe your firm's approach to adopting AI tools?

- **52%** Use best-of-breed based upon use case
- **20%** All AI tools are still prohibited
- **15%** Standardize on a single foundational model
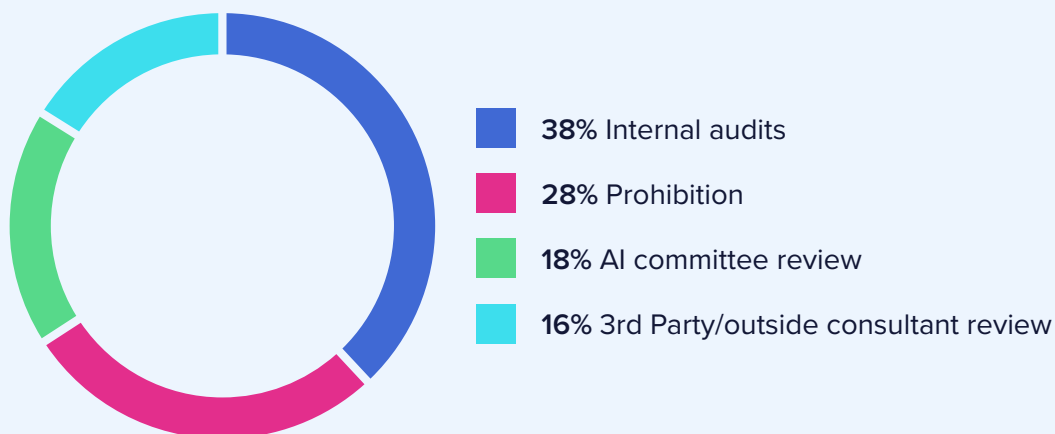- **13%** Build our own
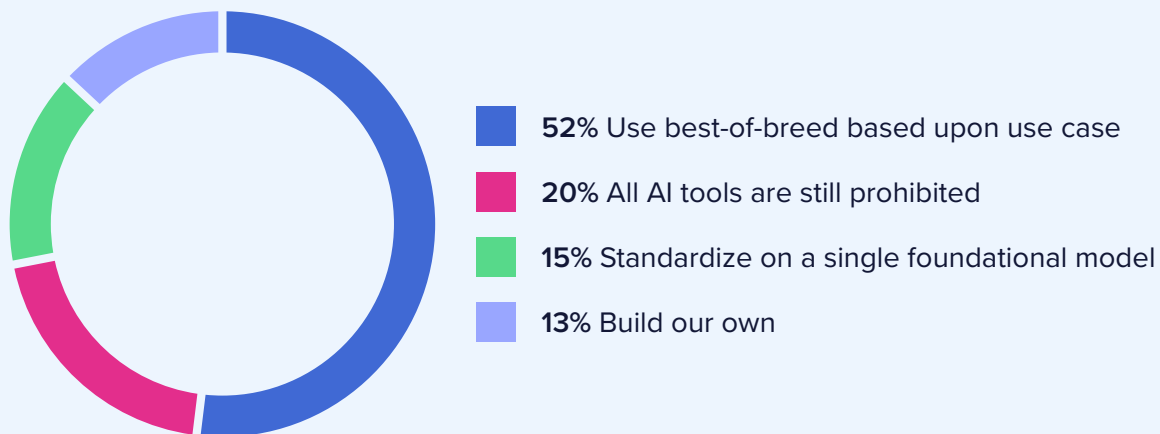
12. Does your firm have an AI governance program (i.e., defines policy, prioritizes use cases, conducts vendor risk management, summarizes project learnings, etc.)?

- 32% Yes
- 68% No
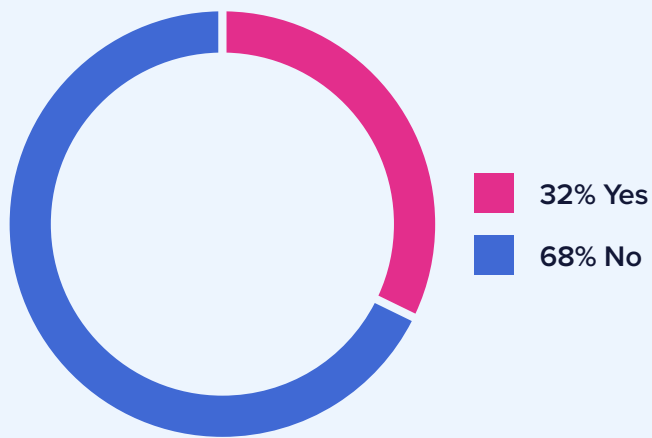
13. Which departments participate in the AI governance program?

- 23% Compliance
- 18% Legal
- 17% Risk management
- 16% Executive leadership
- 14% Data science
- 12% Business unit representatives
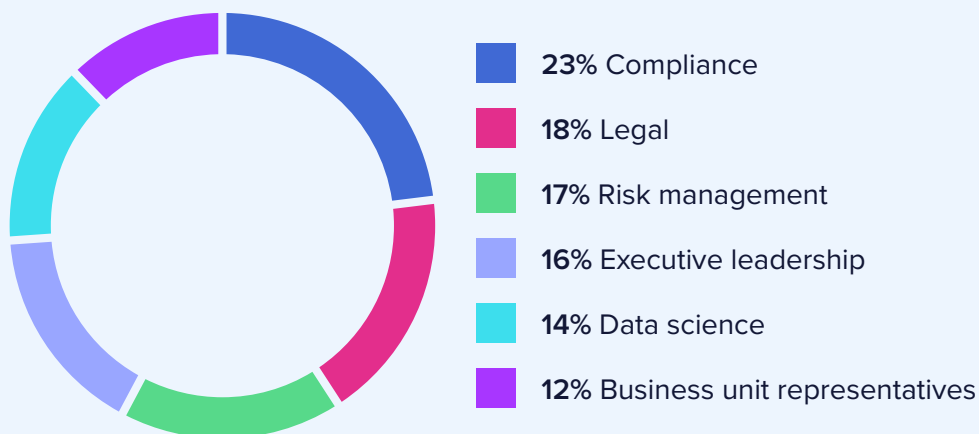
14. What policies does your firm have in place to ensure your firm and employees use AI appropriately?

- 38% Internal audits
- 28% Prohibition
- 18% AI committee review
- 16% 3rd Party/outside consultant review

15. Does your firm already use generative AI tools?

32% Yes

68% No
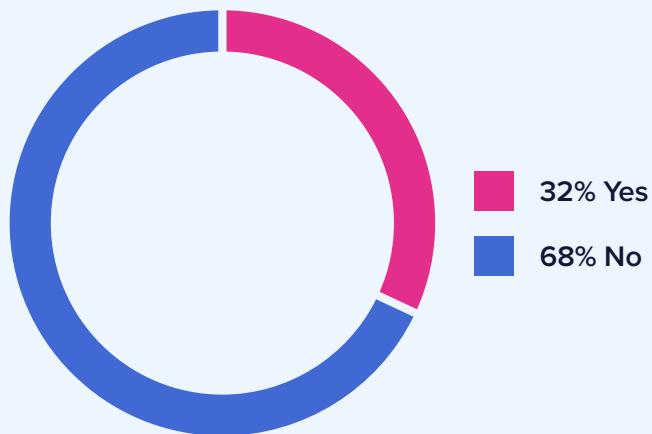
16. How broadly used are generative AI tools at your firm?

35% Only within previously approved applications and tools (Microsoft Copilot, Salesforce Einstein)

32% Select use cases for priority teams or individuals with vetted need

20% Only the top priority use cases, very limited/controlled

13% Broadly implemented and adopted across the business
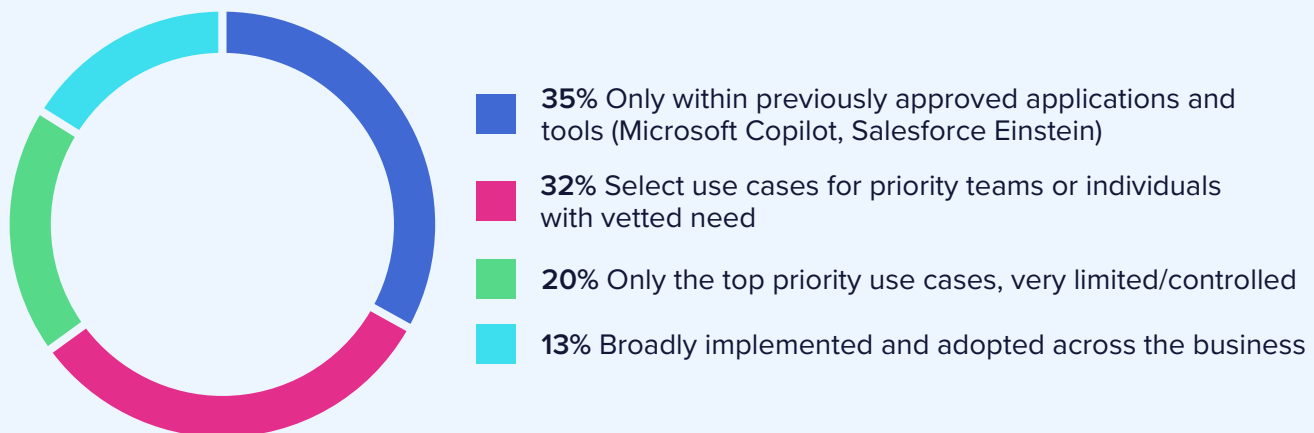
17. Where does your firm plan to be with generative AI at the start of 2025?

43% Have policies and controls implemented to govern its use

33% Continue to prohibit for business use

20% Completing and reviewing results from pilot project

4% Full enterprise deployment of top priority use cases
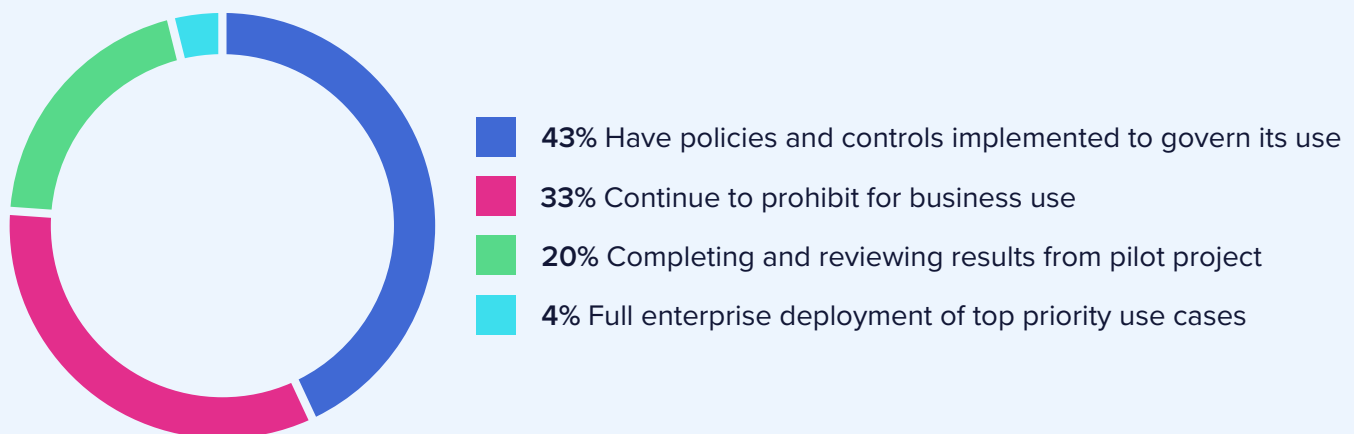
18. Which generative AI use cases are the highest priority for your firm?

- **48%** Internal only (productivity gains such as in meeting summarization)
- **22%** Risk and compliance use cases (risk reviews, regulatory summaries)
- **21%** Collaborative use cases (using Copilot in Microsoft Teams to improve decision making)
- **9%** Client-facing use cases (robo-advisory service enhancements)
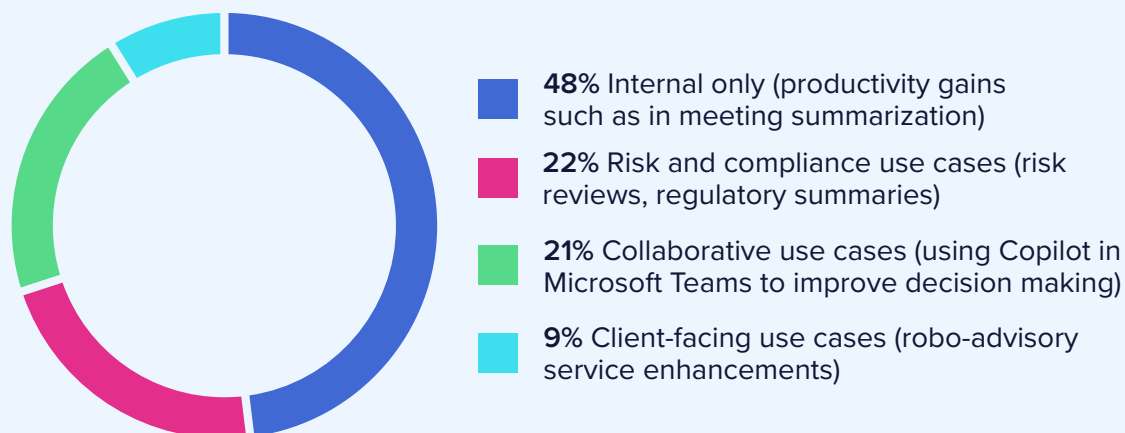
19. How do you expect generative AI to impact your regulatory compliance objectives in 2025?

- **32%** More uncertainty due to evolving regulatory guidance on explainability
- **26%** No change
- **22%** Creates additional complexity due to generative AI features embedded into approved communication tools
- **20%** Shorten response time to regulatory inquiries
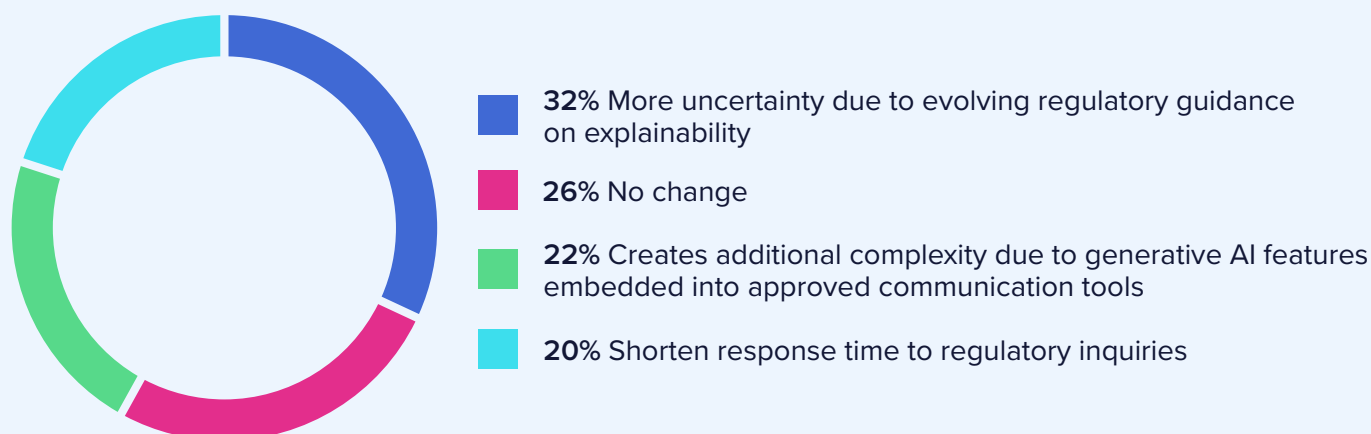
20. If you had the ability to use AI technology to more proactively identify risks and business opportunities from the data you already store for compliance purposes, what would be your top use case?

- **18%** Uncover revenue opportunities based on historical data and trends
- **18%** Automate first pass of document review and supervisory policy alerts
- **16%** Flag behavioral patterns to proactively detect financial crime
- **16%** Identify internal business threats (insider trading, corporate espionage)
- **13%** Leverage to scan archived content to identify policy infractions and information risks
- **12%** Use to classify and preserve content according to business value and risk
- **7%** Identify HR violations (harassment, bullying)

Smarsh enables companies to transform oversight into foresight by surfacing business-critical signals in all of their digital communications. Regulated organizations of all sizes rely upon the Smarsh portfolio of cloud-native digital communications capture, retention, and oversight solutions to help them identify regulatory and reputational risks within their communications data before those risks become losses, fines, or headlines.

Smarsh serves a global client base spanning the top banks in North America, Europe, and Asia, along with leading brokerage firms, insurers, registered investment advisors and U.S. federal, state and local government agencies. To discover more about the future of communications capture, archiving and oversight, visit www.smarsh.com or follow Smarsh on LinkedIn.

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